

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SNM-05 DEAE-00 H-01 HEW-04

SS-15 SP-02 OES-07 PA-01 AID-05 JUSE-00 ICAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0039

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 07410

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF NARCOTICS AND NORML LAWSUIT IN
SOCIAL WORKING GROUP SESSION OF CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM

1. SOCIAL WORKING GROUP OF CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM MET
MAY 4 AND INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF NARCOTICS COOPERATION
AND LAWSUIT FILED BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE REFORM
OF MARIJUANA LAWS (NORML).

2. UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS ALFONSO ROSENS-
WEIG-DIAS OPENED DISCUSSION BY NOTING THAT USG HAS IDEN-
TIFIED TWO SENATORS AND TWO CONGRESSMEN TO PARTICIPATE
IN NARCOTICS SUBGROUP. HE SAID GOM WOULD SOON DESIG-
NATE ITS PARTICIPANTS AND WOULD SUGGEST A DATE FOR THE
FIRST MEETING.

3. ROSENSWEIG NOTED THAT GOM IS MAKING SERIOUS EFFORT
TO DESTROY POPPY AND MARIJUANA AT GREAT COST IN TERMS OF
MONEY AND LIVES. BECAUSE OF THE REMOTE LOCATION AND
GREAT NUMBER OF SUCH CROPS, GOM DECIDED TO USE HERBICIDES
AFTER TECHNICAL STUDY TO ASSURE THEY WERE SAFE. HE SAID
GOM MUST PURSUE THIS POLICY. HE THEN STATED THAT GOM
HAD NOTICED A TENDENCY IN THE UNITED STATES TO CRITICIZE
THE USE OF HERBICIDES, AND FOUND IT UNUSUAL THAT WHILE
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THE USG APPLAUDED THE ERADICATION PROGRAM, IT ALSO COM-
PLAINED THAT "MARIJUANA DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS OF FOOD
AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION".

4. SECOND DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL SAMUEL ALBA-
LEYVA THEN REVIEWED THE RESULTS OF GOM ERADICATION EF-
FORTS, NOTING THAT THE PRICE OF HEROIN IN THE UNITED

STATES HAS RISEN, ITS PURITY HAS DECLINED, AND THAT THERE ARE NOW 50 PERCENT FEWER HEROIN DEATHS THAN PREVIOUSLY. HE SAID THAT THE GOM IS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE METHODS IT IS NOW USING, DESPITE THE COST, THE LIVES LOST, AND THE ECONOMIC DISLOCATION WHICH RESULTS. HE NOTED THAT THE GOM WAS DEVELOPING STUDIES OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO PROVIDE ALTERNATE INCOME FOR THOSE NOW ENGAGED IN IL-LICIT DRUG PRODUCTION.

5. ALBA CONTINUED THAT THE GOM HAD NOTICED CONSIDERABLE UNCERTAINTY ON THE PART OF THE USG IN HOW TO RESPOND TO GROUPS COMPLAINING ABOUT CONTAMINATED MARIJUANA. HE SAID THAT THE GOM NEEDED FROM THE USG AN UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENT OF ITS INTENT ON FUTURE ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO'S ERADICATION PROGRAM SO THAT THE GOM COULD, IF NECESSARY, PLAN THOSE ACTIVITIES WHICH IT MIGHT HAVE TO CONTINUE WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES.

6. ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL MICHAEL J. EGAN (US CO-CHAIRMAN OF WORKING GROUP) NOTED THAT THE USG APPRECIATES AND APPLAUDS US-MEXICAN NARCOTICS COOPERATION WHICH IS AIMED AT HARMFUL SUBSTANCES THAT ENDANGER THE POPULATIONS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE USG WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SUPPORTS THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN. HE THEN EXPLAINED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE (HEW) HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HEALTH OF AMERICAN CITIZENS
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AND THAT IT HAS POINTED OUT THE DANGERS OF USING MARIJUANA, PARTICULARLY THAT SPRAYED WITH PARAQUAT. (AS AN ASIDE, HE NOTED THAT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS ALWAYS HELD THAT MARIJUANA IS HARMFUL.) HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HEW WAS NOT SINGLING OUT MEXICO ALONE, BUT THAT SECRETARY CALIFANO HAD ALSO LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO WARN AMERICANS ABOUT USING TOBACCO GROWN IN THE CAROLINAS AND GEORGIA.

7. EGAN CONTINUED THAT THE SUIT QUESTIONING USG ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO'S ERADICATION CAMPAIGN WAS BROUGHT NOT BY AN ENTITY OF THE USG, BUT BY NORML, A CITIZENS' GROUP. HE SAID THAT THE USG WAS VIGOROUSLY DEFENDING AGAINST THAT SUIT AND ARGUING THAT THE USG HAS A RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE WITH MEXICO IN THIS ENDEAVOR. EGAN THEN EXPLAINED THE TECHNICAL BASIS OF THE SUIT, NOTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAD AGREED TO MEET CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS, CONFIDENT THAT SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE USG'S RIGHT TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING MEXICO'S EFFORT. HE CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THIS WAS NOT A PROBLEM BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS, BUT BETWEEN THE USG AND A GROUP OF CITIZENS, AND AFFIRMED AGAIN

THAT THE USG IS FIGHTING THE SUIT VIGOROUSLY.

8. DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR MATTHEW NIMETZ (US CO-CHAIRMAN OF WORKING GROUP) ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH EGAN'S REMARKS, NOTED THAT HE FREQUENTLY HEARS PRAISE OF MEXICO'S EFFORTS WHEN TALKING TO U.S. CONGRESSMEN, AND SAID USG LOOKED FORWARD TO HEARING FROM GOM ON DESIGNATION OF ITS PARTICIPANTS IN THE NARCOTICS SUBGROUP. LUCEY

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